

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, for [[and]] transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said image reading apparatus comprising:

generation means for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selection means for selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

determination means for determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user;

input means for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by said determination means;

transmitting means for transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

reception means for receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus ~~of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information;~~ and

control means for controlling ~~reading of the image and transmission~~  
~~of the~~ transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus,  
~~representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus,~~ in accordance with  
the received result of the ~~determination~~ authentication of the transmitted management  
information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 2. (previously presented): An image reading apparatus according to  
Claim 1, wherein said control means compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the  
image signal.

Claims 3-5. (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended): An image reading method for controlling an  
image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a  
network, [[and]] transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to  
one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said image reading method comprising  
the steps of:

generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for  
receipt of the generated image signal;

determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus  
requests input of management information relating to a user;

inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination in said determining step;

transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus ~~of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information; and~~

controlling ~~reading of the image and transmission of the~~ transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, ~~representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus;~~ in accordance with the received result of the ~~determination~~ authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 7. (previously presented): An image reading method according to Claim 6, wherein said control step includes compressing the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 8-14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended): A computer readable memory storing a program executing an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~[[and]]~~ transmitting

an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said program comprising:

code for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

code for selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

code for determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user;

code for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by said determination code;

code for transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

code for receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus ~~of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information;~~ and

code for controlling ~~reading of the image and transmission of the~~ transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus. ~~representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus;~~ in accordance with the received result of the ~~determination~~ authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 16. (currently amended): A computer readable memory according to Claim 15, wherein said control code compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 17-25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said selection means selects the ~~selected~~ image forming apparatus ~~performs~~ printing based on the received image signal according to the generated image signal.

Claim 27. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the management information includes at least a user ID, a division ID, or a title ID for the authentication determination at the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 28-33. (canceled)